



## RTCA in Michigan

The Rivers, Trails and Conservation Assistance (RTCA) program is the community assistance arm of the National Park Service. The National Park Service (NPS) staff provide technical assistance to community groups, city, county, tribal governments, and non-profit organizations working to enhance close-to-home outdoor recreation and natural resource conservation opportunities. We help local leaders plan and design trails and parks; conserve and improve access to natural areas; protect special places; and create recreation opportunities.

The RTCA program in Michigan offers a wide range of services that can be tailored to meet the needs of an individual project. The NPS staff members are trained facilitators who encourage project leaders to build collaborative partnerships among governmental and non-governmental stakeholders. The program helps communities and groups define their vision, goals, and objectives; analyze issues and opportunities; and develop strategic action plans and time lines for projects. We do not provide financial assistance, but can help project partners identify and secure sources of funding and technical support.

Any community with committed project partners can apply for assistance. Believing the best plans are completed locally, the National Park Service will work with partners to encourage broad-based community participation in planning, designing, and implementing the projects we support.

In 2016, the National Park Service in Michigan will work on a variety of projects including:

- **Copper Heritage Trail** – The project goal is to connect Keweenaw National Historic Park and places linked to an extensive mining history and provide an extraordinary opportunity for interpretation of the regions copper mining heritage. (Location: Hancock and Calumet, Michigan)
- **Flint River Water Trail** – The project goal is to develop a Flint River Water Trail Management Plan for the 140 mile river that will identify a water trail management entity and improve education, recreation and conservation opportunities and practices leading to national water trail designation. (Location: Flint, Genesee and Lapeer Counties, Michigan)
- **Grand River Restoration Project** – The project goal is to restore the rapids to the Grand River, increase recreational access and whitewater course, improve river safety, and restore habitat for lake sturgeon and endangered snuffbox mussels. (Location: Grand Rapids, Michigan)
- **North Country Trail: Development Strategy** – The project goal is to define a model approach and to create a standing committee that oversee and implements trail development in support of the goals and vision of North Country Trail Association and the North Country Trail National Scenic Trail. (Location: Lowell, Michigan)
- **Rouge Park Trails** – The Project Goal is to improve trails and facilities for outdoor education programs and engage more young people to experience the outdoors. (Location: Detroit, Michigan)
- **Rouge River Water Trail** – The project goal is to improve public access, information, and paddling facilities on the lower branch and main stem of the Rouge River. (Location: Detroit Metro Area and Wayne County, Michigan)



Fishermen on the Grand River (Grand Rapids, Michigan)

- **Shiawassee River Water Trail** – The project goal is to create a comprehensive water trail plan for the 120 mile Shiawassee River in Oakland, Genesee, Shiawassee, and Saginaw Counties and pursue a National Water Trail System designation. (Location: Oakland, Genesee, Shiawassee, and Saginaw Counties, Michigan)
- **Traverse City to Charlevoix Trail** – The project goal is to provide a 46 mile non-motorized trail connecting Traverse City, Elk Rapids, Charlevoix, Michigan and to a 325 mile non-motorized transportation and recreation trail network. (Location: Grand Traverse and Antrim Counties, Michigan)

## Recent Success Story

**The Fred Meijer Clinton-Ionia-Shiawassee Trail** – The Michigan Department of Natural Resources announced the opening of the Fred Meijer Clinton-Ionia-Shiawassee Trail. The non-motorized trail extends 42 miles from Ionia to Owosso, and is one of four trails that make up the 125 mile Fred Meijer River Valley trail network. The Fred Meijer Foundation established a \$3 million endowment fund for long term maintenance of the trail network. The National Park Service guided the Michigan Department of Natural Resources, Michigan Department of Transportation, and a multi-jurisdictional planning team through a 3 year comprehensive process to produce the Fred Meijer River Valley Rail Trail Design and Development Guide. “I want to tell you what a quality job you did on the Fred Meijer River Valley Rail Trails Design and Development Guide. I do not believe I truly understood its value until this last year. I have gone back and referenced it so many times.” Terry McLeod, Friends of the Clinton-Ionia-Shiawassee Trail.

For more information about the RTCA program refer to: [www.nps.gov/rtca](http://www.nps.gov/rtca), or for information about ongoing or potential RTCA projects in Michigan contact:

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